

LIFE IMPROVES THROUGH QUESTION ASKED ON HEATING ASSISTANCE APPLICATION

Outline of Need: Seventy-four year old Daryl Peterson completed a heating assistance application and noted a box he could mark to get information regarding assistance with weatherizing his home. Knowing his home needed weatherizing, he marked the box. Robert Palsma of the Rural Office of Community Service (ROCS), who handles the weatherization program, visited Daryl's home. Robert found during his visit to Daryl's home that there were some major health and safety issues that needed repair prior to the home being weatherized and contacted Patricia Ebeling, Rural Development Specialist, at USDA Rural Development to partner with ROCS. Patricia visited Daryl's home with Robert and found that Daryl had no running water or sewer in his home. Pipes had frozen and broke and Daryl did not have the resources on his limited fixed monthly income of only social security to have them repaired. Also, Daryl's only source of heat in the home was an unvented space heater in his living room and he closed off the other rooms to keep warm. The unvented space heater was a definite safety hazard due to the possibility of carbon monoxide poisoning.

How Rural Development Helped: Patricia assisted Daryl with completing an application for Rural Development's 504 loan/grant program to repair the health and safety hazards in his home. Rural Development was able to assist Daryl with a 504 loan at 1% interest and a payment of just \$5.15 a month. However, Daryl's budget did not show repayment ability for a large enough loan to complete all of the needed repairs so he also was approved for a 504 grant which will allow all health and safety repairs to be completed.

The Results: Daryl and his dog "Puppy" are now enjoying running water in their home. Daryl said it was so good to be able to take a bath after mowing his lawn and he was able to give Puppy a bath also. Daryl is looking forward to his new vented wall furnace being installed shortly. ROCS will then complete the weatherization of Daryl's home and he will be much more comfortable during the upcoming South Dakota winter. Daryl cannot believe how his life is improving just by marking a box on a heating assistance application and then forgetting about it. Daryl cried as he state, "No one has ever done anything like this for me in my entire life."

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